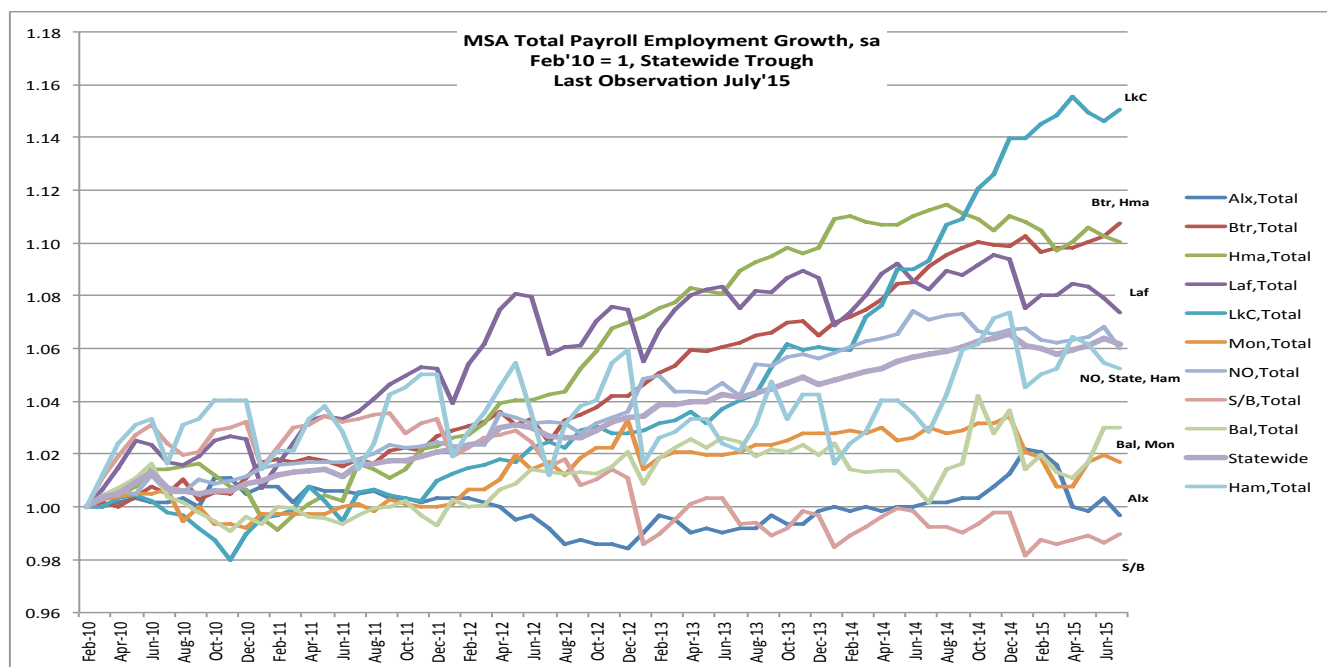


## Metro Area Employment Growth, July 2015



A convenient metric to compare economic performance across metro areas is total payroll employment; the headline employment measure reported for the national economy, and all state and metro areas on a monthly basis. The graph above depicts this employment concept for each of the state's nine metro areas<sup>1</sup>, the balance of the state, and the state as a whole. In this graph, monthly seasonally adjusted<sup>2</sup> total payroll employment for each area is indexed to the month of February 2010, when the state's payroll employment total was at its low point in the 2008-09 national recession. The months subsequent to that trough month reflect the economic recovery/expansion phase of the business cycle. The value of each line at any month represents the percent change of that area's total payroll employment from the month of February 2010. For example, by July 2015 total employment in the Lake Charles area (LkC) was 15.1% greater than in February 2010, while in the new Shreveport-Bossier City area total employment was 1.0% smaller.

At this stage of the recovery/expansion the Lake Charles, Baton Rouge, Houma and Lafayette areas are leading the state in employment growth. A second tier of New Orleans and the new Hammond area have grown at near the statewide average. A third tier of more modest growth includes Monroe and the balance-of-the-state, having grown below the statewide average. At this point, the Shreveport-Bossier City area and the Alexandria area are exhibiting losses of total employment relative to February 2010.

While 28% of total employment currently occurs in areas with a drop in employment or very modest growth from early 2010, there is still 72% of employment in metro areas that have experienced near average or above average growth over this period. Above average growth has occurred in the Lake Charles, Baton Rouge, Houma, and Lafayette areas comprising 41% of the state's employment, followed by near average growth in the New Orleans and Hammond areas comprising 31% of total employment. Below average growth has occurred in the Alexandria, Monroe, Shreveport-Bossier, and balance-of-the-state areas with a combined share of 28%.

Statewide, the compound annual average growth rate of total employment over this sixty-six month period has been 1.1%. The above-average tier has exhibited 1.77% annual growth while the below-average tier has exhibited only 0.20% annual growth. At the extremes are Lake Charles with a high growth rate of 2.56%, largely from mid-2013, and Shreveport-Bossier City with a low rate of -0.19%, largely from early-2013.

<sup>1</sup> Beginning with 2015, changes to official metro area designations have been made that add an additional metro area to the state, designated as the Hammond area encompassing Tangipahoa Parish. In addition, additional parishes have been added to three existing metro areas. The Lafayette area now includes Acadia, Iberia, and Vermillion Parishes. The New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner area now includes St. James Parish. The Shreveport-Bossier City area now includes Webster Parish. These parishes were formerly captured in the balance-of-state area.

<sup>2</sup> Seasonally adjusted data for each metro area and the statewide area are provided by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. The non-metro balance-of-the-state area is simply the difference between the statewide area and the sum of the metro areas.